

NCO Leadership Center of Excellence Celebrates 50 Anniversary

The Army's premiere enlisted military educational institute, the NCO Leadership Center of Excellence and Sergeants Major Academy, celebrated its 50th anniversary with a commemorative ceremony held January 20, in the center's Cooper Lecture Center, Fort Bliss, Texas.

Hosted by Command Sgt. Maj. Jason Schmidt, commandant of the NCOLCoE and SGM-A, the ceremony was attended by notable figures from the institute's past and present, and included Command Sgt. Maj. Daniel Hendrex, U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, command sergeant major, and Sgt. Maj. of the Army (retired) and the first enlisted commandant of the SGM-A, Raymond F. Chandler III, who spoke virtually from his home.



The NCOLCoE presented a brief history of the organization to a small audience in attendance due to COVID mitigation. The event was also live streamed over social media platforms making it accessible to all.

“What you imparted on me was not lost in translation. I have engrained it through those teachings,” Hendrex a graduate of Sergeants Major Course Class 57 said. “It has been that linkage to the value of strong leadership,

the importance of our high moral standards and the true character that embodies the Army Values, and what is so well described as the NCO Creed. The professionalism of NCO Corps is a direct reflection on this education example you have provided – service before self and excellence above all – and I am proud to be part of it. Congratulations on reaching such an important milestone.”

The program narrator noted, the NCOLCoE is the backbone of NCO education. It holds a unique status as the only Army school commanded, staffed, administered, and run solely by NCOs. Since becoming an entirely enlisted lead organization in 2009, the NCOLCoE has not only taken charge of enlisted and NCO education but has also made inroads into the future that helps to build leaders of character, confidence, and commitment. The school was founded in 1972, under the name the United States Army Sergeants Major Academy which it was known as until 2018, when the name changed to better represent the wide selection of classes and training programs available for all levels of NCOs.

Hendrex praised the organization's ability to adapt to unforeseen circumstances such as the COVID pandemic. Even during these difficult times when everything shut down TRADOC, the

NCOLCoE and the academy reorganized in a couple of weeks and immediately got back to work, said Hendrex.

“This year this organization is turning 50 years old,” Command Sgt. Maj. Jason Schmidt, 23rd commandant of the NCOLCoE, said. “When the Army approved the original concept of the NCO education system in 1969, I am sure there was plenty of excitement and even trepidation to what was being written into the history books. Since then, USASMA became the lead for all enlisted common training and became a model for all others to follow.”



Every class to graduate the academy after class #5 has also produced a soldier who would rise to the position of Sergeant Major of the Army, the highest position for an enlisted soldier in the Army. Including Sgt. Maj. of the Army (retired) Raymond Chandler who gave his remarks on the NCOLCoE and its importance as a center for the development of the Army’s future leaders.

Since 1975, the academy has been attended by international students from partner nations including Australia, Kazakhstan, Serbia, Poland, Ukraine, Rwanda, Jamaica and Morocco among others. This wide variety of students made the NCOLCoE the world’s leader in enlisted military training, shaping the futures of military originations the world over.



Since 2009, the academy has been commanded by an NCO, starting with CSM Raymond Chandler III. With this transition the Army NCO core can proclaim “We Train Our Own,” which NCOLCoE continues to be demonstrated today.

Nearly 500,000 Soldiers have graduated from NCOLCoE courses over the past 50 years, be it in person or remotely.

Additionally, spouses of many Soldiers have attended Spouse Leadership Development Course, building stronger support systems for Soldiers who deploy.

The NCOLCoE is acknowledged by military and civilian organizations as the world's premiere institution for the education of NCOs. It is an accredited academic institution and is aligned under Army University and the Combined Arms Command, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, with additional reporting to Training and Doctrine Command, Fort Eustis, Virginia. The NCOLCoE drives change for NCO and enlisted Soldier education by providing professional military education that develops holistically fit, disciplined, well-educated professionals capable of meeting the challenges of large-scale combat operations in a multi-domain environment. The NCOLCoE also trains the NCOs of our sister services and global allies.